ONE DAY AT A TIME.

BY HELEN JACKSON. ("H. H.")

One day at a time! That's all it can be:
No faster than that in the hardest fate,
And days have their limits, however we
Begin them too early and stretch them too late.
One day at a time!
It's a wonderful rhyme,
A good one to live by.
A day at a time,

One day at a time! Every heart that aches
Knows only too well how long that may seem;
But it's never to-day which the spirit breaks,
It's the darkened future without a gleam.
One day at a time!
It's a wholesome rhyme,
A good one to live by,
A day at a time.

One day at a time! A burden too great
To be borne for two can be borne for one;
Who knows what will enter to-morrow's gate?
While yet we are speaking all may be done,
One day at a time!
It's a wholesome rhyme,
A good one to live by,
A day at a time.

One day at a time! When joy is at hight—
Such joy as the heart can never forget—
And pulses are throbbing with wild delight,
How hard to remember that suns must set,
One day at a time!
It's a wholesome rhyme,
A good one to live by,
A day at a time.

One day at a time! But a single day,
Whatever its load, whatever its length;
And there's a bit of precious Scripture to say
That, according to each, shall be our strength.
One day at a time!
It's a wholesome rhyme,
A good one to live by,
A day at a time.

One day at a time! 'Tis the whole of life!
All sorrow, all joy, are measured therein,
The bound of our purpose, our noblest strife,
The one only countersign, sure to win!
One day at a time!
It's a wholesome rhyme,
A good one to live by,
A day at a time.

Selected by JULIA A. WOOD.

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

BY REV. JAMES B. TAYLOR, D. D.

That the liberality of God's people, in their contributions to sustain his cause, and spread his truth in the world, is seriously deficient, requires no proof. It is manifest in the history of all our benevolent operations. This deficiency is confined to no denomination of Christians, but is common to all. Its embarrassing influence is felt in every church throughout our land. Indeed, it may be alleged with respect to almost every individual Christian. Who among the disciples of Christ is consecrating a specific portion of his worldly substance to the interests of truth and righteousness? Where is the man who engages in his worldly business, planning and toiling, that he may more liberally contribute to the diffusion of the gospel among the nations of the earth. Such there are; but, alas, how few! With affecting propriety, the charge of the apostle may be brought to bear upon a large portion of the nominally Christian church "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's."

Shall this state of things continue? Is there no remedy? It is cheering to anticipate a change. We must believe that God's people will entertain different views of their responsibility, and more appropriately discharge it. Before the latter day glory shall break upon the world, a higher scale of Christian excellence will be reached, and more habitual benevolence exercised. To assist in bringing about a consummation so glorious, is the design of the following observations.

The propriety or lawfulness of pecuniary contributions for building up the kingdom of Christ, will not here be argued. None deny this. It is too plainly required by the word of God, and too obvious to the common sense of all, to require in this place special attention. We propose simply to consider the importance of adopting some *definite plan*, in contributing to the cause of benevolence. What that plan shall be, will, in some measure depend on the nature of the employment pursued, and the time and regularity of receiving the yearly income. In many agricultural regions funds are received at a certain period of the year, when pecuniary liabilities are met, and arrangements made for the future. In these arrangements much will depend on the quality and quantity of the products of the soil and the state of the market. At this period, when the entire avails of the year are realized, it can be more readily determined by the Christian farmer, how much he ought to appropriate to the cause of Christ. But with the merchant, mechanic, and all such as receive regular salaries, it is otherwise. The former obtains more or less, according to the condition of the commercial world; his receipts, however, are continually flowing in, and by a suitable acquaintance with his business, he may, at less distant intervals, contribute to benevolent objects. The latter classes, from their daily, weekly, or quarterly stipend, can with convenience arrange for casting systematically into the treasury of the Lord.

What we propose in this treatise, is the adoption of some plan, and a regular, systematic pursuance of this plan. Let each Christian, in the fear of God, and from principles of devotion to his divine Redeemer, determine what is the measure or his duty, and the manner in which he ought to perform it: then let him steadily and regularly adhere to the system he has adopted. He may determine the amount of his income, the proportion he will consecrate to God, and the amount to be appropriated to each object. Or, he may lay by him in store, every Lord's day, as the Lord hath prospered him, and from this fund he can draw in meeting the demands of Christian charity.

It has been already intimated, that with respect to many whose receipts are annual, it may be more convenient to declare, in favor of God's cause, a yearly dividend, in preference to weekly contribution. Still, the weekly contributions are practicable in all cases. Every Christian can lay by him in store something for God. It may not be the proper proportion of his income, but any deficiency can be supplied when the avails of his yearly toil are secured. The arguments in favor of frequency and regularity in the pecuniary offerings of the pious are so numerous and weighty that they only need to be contemplated to produce an abiding impression. To some of these arguments the attention of the reader is urgently solicited:

1. *The plan of making stated and frequent appropriations is warranted by scriptural precept and example.* This is the highest authority. If God's word indicate the fitness of systemizing our benefactions, its dictations should be cheerfully regarded. That such is its teaching on this subject, appears both from the Old and New Testaments. Before the Mosaic dispensation commenced, one-tenth of Abraham's substance was given to Melchisidec, the priest of the most high God. This brief record of the payment of tithes for religious uses is incidentally made, and indicates that it was in accordance with the custom of the times among the pious. In separating the Jews as a distinct nation, and ordaining important religious services connected with his worship and glory, God required of them frequent and regular pecuniary contributions. Every Israelite, according as God prospered him, was thus laid under tribute to his divine Sovereign, in a manner which demanded deliberation and system. Under the dispensation of grace, immediately after the ascension of Christ, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul, neither said any of them that aught of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." In this exigency of the church at Jerusalem, when many poor strangers from a distance, attending the feast of Pentecost, were converted, they lacked not, "for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." Such was their thoughtful concern for the infant cause, and such their deliberate benevolence, that instead of making the regular appropriations themselves, they brought all their property, and throwing it into a common treasury left it to be distributed as necessity demanded. When this peculiar condition of the church was changed, and the word of God ran, producing its saving influence in other places, the same benevolence was evinced but in a different manner. The possessions of the people of God were retained, but retained by them as the Lord's stewards. They held themselves in readiness to answer every demand which God in his providence might make on behalf of his people or cause. Their teachers continually inculcated this obligation. From the honored apostle of the Gentiles they learned that upon the first day of the week every one of them, should lay by in store as God had prospered him." This came not in the form of a recommendation but a command. It was not given merely to the church at Corinth, as being adapted specifically to its members, but to other churches. "As I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so, do ye: upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as the Lord hath prospered him."

2. *The plan of a regular and frequent appropriation of funds for benevolent objects is capable of universal application.* In conducting our various philanthropic associations, it is a subject of universal complaint, that comparatively few of those who profess to love Jesus Christ, are assisting to sustain them. In what church do we find all sharing in the expenditure incident to Sabbath School, Bible distribution, and its other objects of benevolence? And why is it so? Do these non-contributors sustain an opposing attitude? They would be offended by such a suspicion. How, then, are we to account for the omission? It is because they have no regularity in their benificence, and because they have no regularity in their beneficence, and because those who give a direction to their energies, as pastors and teachers, have themselves adopted no plan of operation in the collection of funds. All is accomplished in a hurried manner, and by means of unnatural excitement. A few are influenced to action, but the masses are unaffected and inactive. An illustration may be furnished in the history of almost every church. The agent of the mission society makes his appearance. His object is to secure the largest possible amount in the shortest time. He calls upon prominent members, and they readily contribute. He has secured the heavier subscriptions, and now he passes on to another congregation, pursueing the same method of operation. So far as the larger proportion of the membership is concerned, he has altogether failed, simply because they were unprepared to contribute. If, however, the plan of a weekly appropriation had been adopted by all, they might have been addressed by their pastor, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have." What is here supposed to be a fact in one, will hold true with respect to every branch of benevolent labor. The people of God are found, as the apostle expresses it, "unprepared." But let the systematic weekly appropriation be made, each one laying by him in store as the Lord hath prospered, and all will be ready to respond to the call. The rich of their abundance appropriating one-tenth, or one-fourth of their increase; the man of competency laying aside a due proportion of his income; and even the poor widow with her two mites in store;—all can conveniently contribute to assuage the miseries of the race and to spread the gospel among the nations.

3. *A systematic benevolence will be equitable in all its bearings.* If what has been said be true, it follows that a flagrant injustice is practiced in the churches. Some are taxed beyond due proportion, in consequence of the remissness of others. Against this oppression the Apostle Paul seriously remonstrated. "I mean not (said he) that other men be eased, and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality." We have known the entire expense of maintaining the worship of God to devolve on eight or ten individuals in a church of one hundred communicants. If funds were to be obtained for Home or Foreign missions, for Bible distribution, the poor or any other object, these same persons were the donors. The other ninety members, though equally indebted to the grace of God, and under equally solemn obligations to bear a part in the expenditure, have deposited little, if anything, into the treasury of the Lord. And what is the result? The few have been burdened, by meeting not only their own indebtedness, but the obligations of their brethren. Nor is this all. A positive fraud has been practiced on the cause of God. That has been withheld which in its influence would have widened and deepened the channels of Christian charity, making verdant many an arid spot on the earth's surface. If the contributions of the ninety deficient members had been in due proportions deposited with the benefactions of the ten, a greatly increased aggregate would have been the result.

4. *The conviction of responsibility to God is increased by the adoption of a system in pecuniary contributions.* All worldly possessions are the result of divine permission. If property be secured by inheritance, toil or skill, it cannot, therefore, be strictly regarded as belonging to us. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein, for he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." He is the great Proprietor of all. He commits whatever of talent or property men possess into their hands, as a deposit, for the right use of which he holds them responsible. This obligation is but imperfectly recognized, even by those who profess to be saved by his grace, and subjected to his sway. The scanty and irregular tribute returned to God furnishes melancholy evidence of the truth of this allegation. Treasure is laid up on earth with avidity and solicitude, as if it could purchase exemption from disease and death, and if a few fragments are occasionally doled out in acts of benevolence, it is done with a self-gratulation, which would imply that God himself had been brought under obligation. How fearfully has the depravity of man reversed the order of things. But it is the design of the gospel to restore man to the allegiance of his Maker, and by a train of well ordered influences, to prepare him to live as an accountable being. The regular habit of bestowing in deeds of beneficence, from the avails of personal labor or income, tends in an eminent degree to induce this recognition of responsiblity to God. If regular appropriations are made, laying in store as God has prospered, it must be the result of thought and *deliberate calculation.* When dividends are declared in God's favor, and funds are laid aside as belonging specifically to him, a sense of his sovereignty and glory will be increasingly realized. The transcendant worthiness of all that relates to his kingdom, and the rectitude of his claim, will reach and affect the heart. Contributions to religious and charitable objects begin to appear in their true light, not as donations to God's cause, but as a revenue to which he is entitled, and to withhold which would be the basest robbery. An illustration of the tendency of which we speak is furnished in the history of the king of Israel. He had freely and munificently appropriated means for the erection of God's house. He lived not to realize the accomplishment of the object of his wishes, yet in imagination he saw the temple standing forth in all its beautiful proportions, and instead of congratulating himself as worthy of praise, a sense of the solemn responsibility he was under to God constrained him to break forth in humble and rapturous devotion: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory, and the victory and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thy hand is power and might, and in thy hand is it to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? *for all things come from thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*"

5. *Conscientiousness in the bestowal of pecuniary benefactions will be promoted by system.* If all that is contributed to worthy objects from unworthy motives be deducted, the sum total would be seriously diminished. With respect to many who give, it is only because application has been made. If no appeal had sounded in their ears, the object would have been unremembered and unsustained. Very important and extensive arrangements have been adopted to give the preached and written word to the perishing in pagan lands and the destitute at home. This is known to the church. They are aware that contributions, liberal and regular, are needed to carry on these operations, and that in their successful prosecution the glory of God and the salvation of the heathen are involved. Yet who among the thousands of the redeemed on earth purposes, voluntarily and unsolicited, to aid these grand designs? In those instances where the solicitor presents himself, and his applications meet with a favorable response, custom or impulse, and not a conscientious regard for the object, has too often prompted the appropriation.

This will always be found an attendant evil on the incidental and occasional mode of securing funds for benevolent purposes. To obviate this, and to bring the decisions of conscience to bear upon the propriety and measure of every donation, the apostle directed his brethren *to lay them in store as God has prospered them.* He assigns as a reason that there be no gatherings when I come." Their benevolence might have been the result of something else than Christian principle, had they waited till his appearance among them. His powerful appeals might have stirred up their sympathies, and induced them to give beyond their ability. When the excitement had passed way, they might have regretted their contribution. If, however, they laid by them in store, *every week*, their contribution would be the result of deliberation. Conscience would have the opportunity of issuing her mandate. Instead of the unnatural, spasmodic influence resulting from his presence, their bounty would be ready, as the fruit of holy devotion to God and his cause. It would be the work of faith and labor of love.

6. *The benevolence which is subjected to system will be ready and cheerful.* It was the desire of the apostle that his brethren at Corinth should "make up *beforehand*" their bounty, "that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness;" and then he exhorts: "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, nor of necessity, for God loveth a *cheerful* giver." He insists upon a *predetermined systematic* assignment of funds for benevolent purposes, as tending to influence the heart, and to render every distinct donation a *free will offering.* He would have them "enriched in every thing to all bountifulness."